Ken Hillis, Susanna Paasonen, and Michael Petit (Eds.), *Networked affect.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2015. 267 pp. ISBN 978-0-262-02864-6 (hbk).

Reviewed by: Emma Baulch, *Queensland University of Technology, Australia*

What is a productive way to approach social networks in order to understand how questions of agency and affordance are playing out in the everyday of contemporary capitalism? *Networked Affect* addresses this question via a selection of essays that closely scrutinize how entities implicated in the reproduction of social networks—software, sites, platforms, file types, code, nonhuman materials, and human bodies, for example—affect one another. The volume draws on an emerging body of affect theory and its philosophical antecedents (especially Gilles Deleuze and Baruch Spinoza) to shed light on social networks' historical place and significance.

The editors of *Networked Affect* aver an affective appraisal of social networks is productive because it offers a middle way between the technological and linguistic determinisms that haunt media studies. It is not enough, they argue, to conceive of agency solely in terms of humans' mastery over technology, as the mass uptake of smartphones foreshadows the impending irrelevance of concepts of the human as neatly distinct from those of technology. They also contend that not all dimensions of the world are analyzable in linguistic terms as texts. Materials, surfaces, scapes, sounds, and images leave traces on the human sensorium that are decidedly extralinguistic, and can only be accounted for through recourse to the more intuitive concepts and looser worldviews afforded by affect theory.

The 14 essays in the volume are organized into three sections: intensity, sensation, and value. Respectively, these explore the passions, fantasies, and desires that are released in social network engagements (Paasonen, Cho, Tzankova, Hillis, Dean), the dynamics set in motion by the interaction of bodies, images, materials, and words (Parikka, Ash, Sunden, Maddison, Petit), and the laborious styling of selves that affords social networks value (Gregg, Jarrett, Karppi, Pybus).

The essays collected here are solid and weighty; they take to task the deep-seated philosophical questions that developments in communicative capitalism force us to reconsider. How does the character of social networks cause us to rethink the distinction between the animate and the inanimate, the sentient and the nonsentient (Hillis, Ash, Parikka)? What are the shapes of their contents' routes of circulation and what new rhythms of daily life obtain from such circulation (Paasonen, Cho, Dean, Petit)? How do they cause us to reevaluate what constitutes structure, and what constitutes a commodity (Jarrett, Karppi)? How do they cause us to reconsider what constitutes the analog (Sunden)?

Like much of Internet studies, the volume displays a Western bias, specifically towards the Anglosphere (with the exception of Veronika Tsankova's chapter on sexualities in Turkey and Susanna Paasonen's on online debates that proceed in Finnish). There is a need for a heightened global consciousness in Internet studies literature; for scholarly volumes that discuss networked life via a bias towards the Anglosphere to articulate some awareness of the limitations that bias sets on a holistic understanding of the historical continuities and ruptures suggested by various kinds of digitally equipped everyday life in all corners of the planet.

Nevertheless, I came to this volume as a novice, with zero knowledge of affect theory, so my reading practice was less suggestive of a knowing and critical expert, and more of an inquisitive child visiting a new friend's toy-filled bedroom. Jodi Dean's essay, for example, is remarkable for her ability to evoke the shapes and rhythms of networks. After several readings, the image of networks as many-to-many grids began to ebb from my mind. In its place, a series of high velocity sushi trains appeared, laid out wonkily on uneven surfaces, and messily hemmed by unruly crowds who variously cooked, plated up, swapped, shifted, and ate at breakneck speed the contents of these trains. "It's not like cinema, where people only have to show up," she writes. "For communication networks to function at all . . . people have to use them, play with them, add to them, and extend them. Our participation does not subvert communicative capitalism. It drives it." (p. 94).

I surmise that for other novice students of the dynamics of agency and domination in everyday social networking, this volume could also be useful for inspiring new paths of thought, when other available scholarship feels either too steeped in broadcast logics, not attentive enough to the novelties of the digital everyday, or too celebratory of participatory culture to enable a critical analysis of the role social networks play in enabling/disrupting established patterns of capital accumulation. The volume would be well suited to graduate courses, and is a must-read for scholars who approach new media from a sociological or cultural studies perspective.